IMT Nuremberg Archives

H – 3589

International Court of Justice

H3589 - 0002

OFFICE OF CHIEF OF COUNSEL FOR WAR CRIMES

EVIDENCE DIVISION

Date : 2 August 1948

I certify that Document Number PC-72-78 was introduced into evidence as Exhibit Number GB-68 in the Trial by the International Military Tribunal of Hermann GOERING, et al, which commenced on 20 November 1945, and that the attached photostat is a true and correct copy of the original.

Fred Niebergall

Fred NIEBERGALL
Chief, Document
Control Branch.

H3589 - 0003

C E R T I F I C A T E

I hereby certify that the annexed document TC-42-48 No. GB-68 is a photostat of an original document submitted in evidence by the British Prosecution under this number. The original document has been withdrawn in accordance with Rule 10 of the International Military Tribunal, and to the best of my knowledge and belief is to be held at the ECCWC Evidence Library, Palace of Justice, Nuremberg

Paul Joosten

PAUL A. JOOSTEN

General Secretary
International Military Tribunal

Nuremberg, 30 July 1948

[4]

TC72

INTERNATIONAL MILITARY TRIBUNAL
NURNBERG, GERMANY
GB Exhibit 39
Filed Nov 6 1945

Miscellaneous No. 9 (1939)

DOCUMENTS

CONCERNING

GERMAN-POLISH RELATIONS

AND THE

OUTBREAK OF HOSTILITIES BETWEEN GREAT BRITAIN AND GERMANY ON SEPTEMBER 3, 1939

Presented by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs to Parliament by Command of His Majesty

B 043283

LONDON
PRINTED AND PUBLISHED BY HIS MAJESTY'S STATIONERY OFFICE
To be purchased directly from H.M. STATIONERY OFFICE at the following addresses:
York House, Kingsway, London, W.C.2: 120 George Street, Edinburgh 2;
26 York Street, Manchester 1; 1 St. Andrew's Crescent, Cardiff;
80 Chichester Street, Belfast;
or through any bookseller

1939

Price 1s. 0d. net

Cmd. 6106

037205

H3589 – 0004

H3589 – 0005

and to prepare the necessary aids to movement when the lighting has been extinguished. Arrangements have been completed for calling up at very short notice of the personnel of the Air-Raid Precautions Service, and duty officers are available throughout the twenty-four hours at key posts. The last item I mention is that the necessary preliminary steps have been taken to prepare hospitals for the reception of casualties.

I have given a number of instances of steps which have been taken over and above the measures which have already been put into operation. A complete and continuous survey is being carried out over the whole range of our defence preparations, and preparatory measures are being taken in order to ensure that further precautionary measures, if and when they should be found necessary, can be given effect to as rapidly as possible. The instances I have given to the House are merely illustrations of the general state of readiness, of which the House and the country are aware. I think that they justify and partly account for the general absence of fear, or, indeed, of any violent emotion. The British people are said sometimes to be slow to make up their minds, but, having made them up, they do not readily let go. The issue of peace or war is still undecided, and we still will hope, and still will work, for peace; but we will abate no jot of our resolution to hold fast to the line which we have laid down for ourselves.

G.B-68

No. 78.

Reply of the German Chancellor to the Communication of August 28, 1939, from His Majesty's Government. This reply was handed to Sir N. Henderson by Herr Hitler during the evening of August 29, 1939.*

(Translation.)

THE British Ambassador in Berlin has submitted to the British Government suggestions which I felt bound to make in order—

(1) to give expression once more to the will of the Reich Government for sincere Anglo-German understanding, co-operation and friendship;

(2) to leave no room for doubt as to fact that such an understanding could not be bought at the price of a renunciation of vital German interests, let alone the abandonment of demands which are based as much upon common human justice as upon the national dignity and honour of our people.

The German Government have noted with satisfaction from the reply of the British Government and from the oral explanations given by the British Ambassador that the British Government for their part are also prepared to improve the relationship between

* No. 74.

Germany and England and to develop and extend it in the sense of the German suggestion.

In this connexion, the British Government are similarly convinced that the removal of the German-Polish tension, which has become unbearable, is the pre-requisite for the realisation of this hope.

Since the autumn of the past year, and on the last occasion in March, 1939, there were submitted to the Polish Government proposals, both oral and written, which, having regard to the friendship then existing between Germany and Poland, offered the possibility of a solution of the questions in dispute acceptable to both parties. The British Government are aware that the Polish Government saw fit, in March last, finally to reject these proposals. At the same time, they used this rejection as a pretext or an occasion for taking military measures which have since been continuously intensified. Already in the middle of last month Poland was in effect in a state of mobilisation. This was accompanied by numerous encroachments in the Free City of Danzig due to the instigation of the Polish authorities; threatening demands in the nature of ultimata, varying only in degree, were addressed to that City. A closing of the frontiers, at first in the form of a measure of customs policy but extended later in a military sense affecting also traffic and communications, was imposed with the object of bringing about the political exhaustion and economic destruction of this German community.

To this were added barbaric actions of maltreatment which cry to Heaven, and other kinds of persecution of the large German national group in Poland which extended even to the killing of many resident Germans or to their forcible removal under the most cruel conditions. This state of affairs is unbearable for a Great Power. It has now forced Germany, after remaining a passive onlooker for many months, in her turn to take the necessary steps for the safeguarding of justified German interests. And indeed the German Government can but assure the British Government in the most solemn manner that a condition of affairs has now been reached which can no longer be accepted or observed with indifference.

The demands of the German Government are in conformity with the revision of the Versailles Treaty in regard to this territory which has always been recognised as being necessary: viz., return of Danzig and the Corridor to Germany, the safeguarding of the existence of the German national group in the territories remaining to Poland.

The German Government note with satisfaction that the British Government also are in principle convinced that some solution must be found for the new situation which has arisen.

They further feel justified in assuming that the British Government too can have no doubt that it is a question now of conditions, for the elimination of which there no longer remain days, still less weeks, but perhaps only hours. For in the disorganised state of

affairs obtaining in Poland, the possibility of incidents intervening, which it might be impossible for Germany to tolerate, must at any moment be reckoned with.

While the British Government may still believe that these grave differences can be resolved by way of direct negotiations, the German Government unfortunately can no longer share this view as a matter of course. For they have made the attempt to embark on such peaceful negotiations, but, instead of receiving any support from the Polish Government, they were rebuffed by the sudden introduction of measures of a military character in favour of the development alluded to above.

The British Government attach importance to two considerations: (1) that the existing danger of an imminent explosion should be eliminated as quickly as possible by direct negotiation, and (2) that the existence of the Polish State, in the form in which it would then continue to exist, should be adequately safeguarded in the economic and political sphere by means of international guarantees.

On this subject the German Government makes the following declaration:—

Though sceptical as to the prospects of a successful outcome, they are nevertheless prepared to accept the English proposal and to enter into direct discussions. They do so, as has already been emphasised, solely as the result of the impression made upon them by the written statement received from the British Government that they too desire a pact of friendship in accordance with the general lines indicated to the British Ambassador.

The German Government desire in this way to give the British Government and the British nation a proof of the sincerity of Germany's intentions to enter into a lasting friendship with Great Britain.

The Government of the Reich felt, however, bound to point out to the British Government that in the event of a territorial rearrangement in Poland they would no longer be able to bind themselves to give guarantees or to participate in guarantees without the U.S.S.R. being associated therewith.

For the rest, in making these proposals the German Government have never had any intention of touching Poland's vital interests or questioning the existence of an independent Polish State. The German Government, accordingly, in these circumstances agree to accept the British Government's offer of their good offices in securing the despatch to Berlin of a Polish Emissary with full powers. They count on the arrival of this Emissary on Wednesday, the 30th August, 1939.

The German Government will immediately draw up proposals for a solution acceptable to themselves and will, if possible, place these at the disposal of the British Government before the arrival of the Polish negotiator.

H3589 – 0006

H3589-0006A

TC-72-78
GB-68

H-3589

GB-68
TC-72-78

GB68 ~~vide GB39~~

H3589 -0007